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Photograph from Ewing Galloway

FORMER SUN WORSHIPPERS CELEBRATE A CHRISTIAN FESTIVAL IN BOLIVIA

Feathers radiating from hat crowns like the sun's rays and in some cases actual sun motifs embroidered on their costumes are remnants of these Indians' pre-Christian worship in the Andean highlands of Bolivia. Other picturesque touches are the vests of ocelot skin worn by the group of dancers in the left background. Virtually every Christian festival is an occasion for similar native dances among Bolivia's Indians. This celebration was photographed on the Island of the Sun in Lake Titicaca (background), one of the unusual spots included in the religious domain of the Catholic Church (Bulletin No. 4).

HOW TEACHERS MAY OBTAIN THE BULLETINS

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Sicilian Channel Dramatizes Duel Between Sea and Air Power

THE recent spectacular seven-hour fight between the British aircraft carrier *Illustrious* in a convoy and German dive-bombers (probably from air bases in Sicily) has made the Sicilian Channel of the Mediterranean a historic zone.

This narrow place off the island of Sicily in the embattled sea inevitably has become a crucial spot for testing the relative battle value of air power *versus* sea power, a vital question for the United States plans for hemisphere defense.

The Sicilian Channel is the best spot in the Mediterranean for Axis air attacks on the British Navy. The Mediterranean there has a width of only 90 miles, between Cape Bon on the Tunisian coast of North Africa and Sicily. The big Italian island of Sicily at the toe of the Italian peninsula's boot, though generally mountainous, has numerous spots level enough for Axis plane bases, supplied by train-ferry from mainland Italy's transportation system. And British ships are lured into risking the dangers of the Sicilian Channel because it is a time-saving and possibly a life-saving short cut. Since important British interests lie to the east of Sicily, ships must either plow doggedly eastward across the Mediterranean to reach them, or travel an additional 8,200 nautical miles or more around the African continent and into the Suez Canal.

Channel Separates Two Basins of Mediterranean

The 90-mile-wide channel between Sicily and Africa is a zone of relatively shallow water separating the two deep basins of the Mediterranean to the east and west. It is about 100 fathoms deep (600 feet). By contrast, the two-mile strait to the north of Sicily separating the island from Italy's mainland is 150 fathoms deep. The shallow channel facilitated the laying of Italy's African cable, which crosses to Sicily and from there to Italy.

In effect, the Sicilian Channel divides the Mediterranean into halves politically as well as geographically. Except for Gibraltar, all Mediterranean shores west of Sicily, on both the northern and southern sides, are Spanish, French, and Italian. But east of Sicily, the Mediterranean is dotted with British spheres of influence: the vital British bases of Malta and Cyprus, the Suez Canal, the British protectorate of Palestine, the British allies Turkey and Egypt, and British bases in Crete and Greece backing Greek forces in Albania.

Sea-Quakes, Volcanoes, and Invasions Bring Changes

To reinforce these areas without crossing the western Mediterranean would lengthen British shipping routes by about one-third of the earth's circumference. From England to Egypt, for instance, through the Mediterranean is a trip of 3,300 nautical miles, but around the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa is 11,500 nautical miles.

The sea traffic pouring through the Mediterranean narrows has been heavy since the beginning of history. It has brought Sicily a rapid succession of rulers from fifteen different nations, a change of nationality on the average of every two centuries (illustration, next page). British interest in the usually extensive shipping accounts for the maintenance in the Sicilian Channel of a Lloyd's signal station.

The small island of Pantelleria stands in the midst of the Channel, now fortified as an Italian stopper in this Mediterranean bottleneck. Some 150 miles to the east of Pantelleria lies the British island of Malta, recently bombed by Axis planes. Between them is Linosa, Italian islet 65 miles southeast of Pantelleria.

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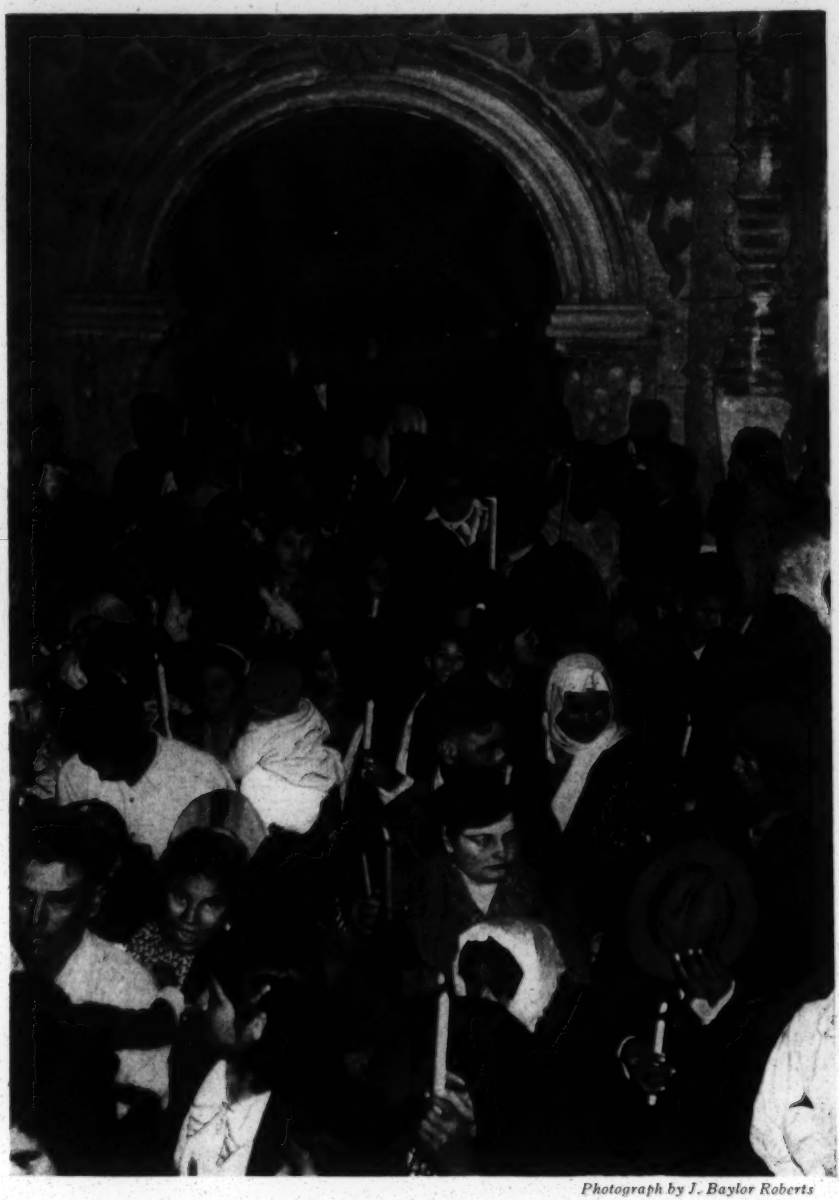

Photograph by J. Baylor Roberts

PAPAGO INDIANS RECALL THAT THEIR PART OF THE U. S. WAS FIRST CHRISTIANIZED FROM MEXICO

The Papago Indians of Arizona became a pioneer part of the "Catholic world's" western hemisphere at the beginning of the 18th century, when Kino, the famous Austrian Jesuit, visited them from his headquarters in Mexico. He taught them, along with his religious beliefs, improved methods of raising livestock and cultivating their crops, as well as new crops to cultivate. Nine miles south of Tucson, on the site of its foundation in 1700, the old church of San Xavier del Bac was later rebuilt by the Franciscans, and now ranks among the best known of the mission churches of the Southwest. The ceremony photographed honors St. Francis Xavier, the Jesuits' founder (Bulletin No. 4).

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Senussi Sect of the Sahara, a Factor in History Again

DESERT trails to Giarabub, once harried by Bedouin outlaws, are dangerous again. This small oasis in the Libian Desert region of the Sahara, a one-time small-scale Mecca for desert Moslems of the Senussi sect, stands near the Libia-Egypt frontier and became an Italian outpost at the start of the Libian campaign. When the British advanced into Libia 150 miles to the north, they refrained from bombing Giarabub out of regard for its religious significance. Now they have undertaken to starve out the Italian garrison by attacking supply lines through the desert.

The Giarabub oasis commands the respect of North African Moslems because of its associations with Sayed Ibn Ali El Senussi, founder of the recent puritanical sect which has counted between one and a half and three million followers, chiefly inhabitants of the Sahara.

Built Up Desert Caravan Routes and Dug Wells

The Grand Senussi, as the founder was called, died at Giarabub in 1859, and was handsomely entombed beneath the ornate dome of the many-arched cloistered mosque (illustration, next page). At this small religious metropolis in the midst of the desert was established the chief *zawia*, or school, of the Senussi sect, which became famous throughout northeast Africa as a religious university. The mosque is large enough for five or six hundred people.

Although handicapped by scarcity of fresh water and date palms, the Giarabub oasis prospered as capital of an extensive religious realm that included about 75 towns and oases in Libia and Egypt. More than half of these were in the eastern part of Libia, Cirenaica. Although later Senussi leaders have moved their residence to other oases deeper in the desert, notably to Cufra about 500 miles south of the Libian coast, Giarabub still has the prestige of the famous tomb-mosque.

The Senussi are dedicated to the hard and puritanical life of early Mohammedanism, as taught in their holy book, the Koran. Like other Moslem sects, they early developed political as well as religious characteristics. They gained control of a network of desert trade routes across the eastern Sahara extending all the way from central Africa to the Mediterranean. They set up their own centers of government and provided wells and way stations between them. They cultivated oasis patches and sent out missionaries to colonize and win converts. Inevitably, they came in conflict with European nations seeking to expand in Africa since the late 19th century.

Resisted Turks, French, British, and Italians

At first, during the last quarter of the 1800's, the Senussi were able to maintain their independence of the Turkish Sultan, within whose sphere of influence most of them lived. They were represented at the court of Istanbul (Constantinople), paid no taxes, and gave no young men for compulsory military service. Gradually, however, the Turks attempted to limit these privileges. As the Senussi moved their headquarters farther inland to escape Turkish interference, they encountered the French pushing northward from the Sudan.

There ensued a tug of war with French colonial authorities, between 1904 and 1911, which further curtailed Senussi power. In the Italo-Turkish war of 1911-12, the still defiant Senussi strongly supported the Turks, and resisted the Italians who took the African possessions of the defeated Turks.

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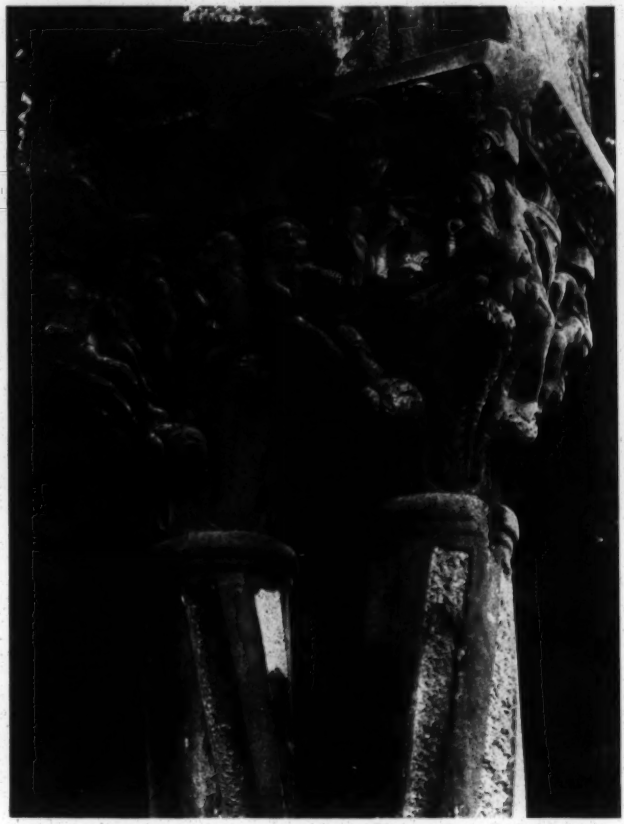
The volcanic rock and crater lakes of Pantelleria, the sulphur mines and lava-block houses of Sicily, and the snow-capped cone of Mount Etna, Sicily's fuming volcano, are evidences of the deep earth forces still shaking and shaping the geography of the Sicilian Channel. The 1908 earthquake on Sicily killed 77,000 people and created a tidal wave 60 miles long. The Mediterranean around Sicily's coast is frequently disturbed by minor sea-quakes.

Note: See also "Sicily: Island of Vivid Beauty and Crumbling Glory" (color insert), *National Geographic Magazine*, October, 1927; and "Zigzagging across Sicily," September, 1924. And in the GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS: "Pantelleria Island, Italy's Gibraltar," October 28, 1935, and "Mt. Etna Conquered by Motor Highway," December 3, 1934.

The Sicilian Channel may be located on The Society's Map of Europe and the Near East, copies of which are available at 50c (paper) and 75c (linen).

Bulletin No. 1, February 3, 1941.



Photograph by F. Galifi Grupi

SICILY'S MONUMENTS COMMEMORATE FOREIGN RULERS BROUGHT BY MEDITERRANEAN SEA TRAFFIC

Rulers of fifteen different nationalities in 3,000 years brought frequent upheavals to Sicily's history. Moslem Saracens in the 10th century, Christian Norman knights from northern France in the 11th, and then German emperors governed the island. The cathedral and monastery of Monreale, near the city of Palermo, was started in 1176 by the Norman king William the Good. Saracenic influences are pointed out by architects in Monreale's Norman decorative detail, such as the almost Moorish diagonal fluting of the 108 pairs of columns in the cloister and the arabesquelike pattern of the carvings. Its position at a Mediterranean bottleneck indirectly gave to Sicily one of the finest known examples of Norman architecture.

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Magnesium: Metal with Wings

THE lightest of commercial metals, magnesium, has come into such rapidly increasing demand that the new magnesium foundry being constructed in Detroit will be one of the largest in the world.

Magnesium has soared into top-flight production figures largely because of its lightness. A cubic foot of magnesium weighs only 2/9 as much as the same amount of steel, and only 2/3 as much as aluminum. In fact, it is the lightest structural metal yet available in large enough quantities for commercial use. This featherweight metal therefore makes an admirable flying companion for heavier construction materials, and consequently it is being assigned a vital rôle in the exciting drama of accelerated airplane building.

Impartially Used in Aircraft and in Antiaircraft Bullets

About 80 per cent of the magnesium castings produced in recent years have been aircraft parts. These castings are usually magnesium alloyed with aluminum, usually with a little manganese and zinc added, since the mixture is stronger. Extensive use of magnesium parts can reduce the weight of a single plane by several hundred pounds, thereby increasing the pay load while decreasing power needs.

Airplane wheels, which may weigh 100 pounds or more apiece, are now frequently made of magnesium alloy. The airplane fuselage's internal frame, floor sections, door frames, and partition walls are other parts where the use of magnesium cuts down weight. The metal also goes into the plane's de-icing equipment and air ducts; such essential parts of the engine as generators, cam-shaft housings, pump bodies, crankcases, and oil sumps; and miscellaneous elements such as starters, pedals, accessory cases, and other cockpit fittings.

Another factor which booms magnesium's wartime importance is its use in munitions. The tracer bullets by which antiaircraft gunners get their range on attacking planes and set them afire, flares, and some types of incendiary bombs call for magnesium ingredients.

Metal Mined from Sea Water, Both Prehistoric and Contemporary

The high-flying-est magnesium on record was the gondola of the stratosphere balloon *Explorer II,* which in 1935 carried two members of the National Geographic Society-U. S. Army Air Corps Stratosphere Expedition to the highest altitude yet reached by man—72,395 feet (illustration, next page).

In the year of the outbreak of the present war, armament programs around the world had boomed world production of this "flighty" metal to about 36,000 short tons. Germany until that time surpassed all other nations in magnesium production, alone accounting for 18,000 short tons, or half of the earth's total output.

Although this metallic lightweight is the third most plentiful metal in the earth's crust, the entire United States production of primary magnesium comes from sea water. At brine wells in Midland, Michigan, the metal is extracted from remnants of a prehistoric sea now stranded underground in the middle of the North American continent. The only other U. S. source is the Freeport, Texas, plant, new in 1940, which isolates the magnesium in sea water from the Gulf of Mexico. A cubic mile of sea water is estimated to contain 5,700,000 tons. The largest annual production yet recorded in the United States is 5,325 short tons.

The boom of magnesium encroaches upon the realm of that former light-metal

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During the European war of 1914-18, with its repercussions in Africa, the then Grand Senussi was persuaded by Turkish and German influence to undertake an invasion of western Egypt. Although at the time the old specter of a "holy war" in North Africa was raised, the Senussi were overcome by British forces. Their leader, the would-be "Viceroy of Africa," as the Turks titled him, fled to Turkey in a submarine and later retired to an interior Libian oasis.

Post-war relations between the Italians and the Senussi have been "spotty." Between 1917 and 1923—during which period the Grand Senussi acknowledged Italian rule in return for authority over the interior oases of Gialo, Jedabia, Augila, and Cufra—there was generally peace. In 1923, however, Rome's earlier agreement with the Senussi terminated, and the war of Senussi resistance went on. In time, the Italians took over all the Senussi oases except remote southern Cufra. Even that settlement was reported bombed by the Italians in the Cirenaica campaigns of some years ago, its inhabitants scattering to the oasis of Siwa and other Egyptian refuges. Reports of Senussi sabotage directed against Italian forces in Libia have arisen from the current campaign.

Some travelers say that the power of the Senussi chieftains, "temporal or spiritual, is a thing of the past." Others believe that the Senussi may yet wield decisive power in North African life and politics.

Note: Additional information about the Senussi can be found in "Cirenaica, Eastern Wing of Italian Libia," *National Geographic Magazine*, June, 1930; and "Crossing the Untraversed Libyan Desert," September, 1924. And in the GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS: "Egypt's Fortified 'Backdoor' Opens on Italian Libia," April 1, 1940.

Bulletin No. 2, February 3, 1941.

Photograph by Vittorio Dimani

ELECTRICITY LIGHTS MOSLEM SPLENDOR IN THE DESERT FOR THE SENUSSI

Born in Algeria, the founder of the Senussi sect journeyed to Mecca to study the Koran, and advocated a puritanical reform of Moslem practices. He preached that gems and gold were prohibited except for women's adornments, and forbade coffee and cigarettes; the penalty he advocated for smoking was the amputation of the smoker's hand. Banished from Mecca in 1838, he began building religious schools in Egypt and Libia, of which the most famous is the university at Giarabub. His tomb in the large mosque at the Giarabub oasis stands behind the intricately carved screen, surrounded with rich rugs, cut-glass candelabra lighted by electricity, mosaics, and other colorful features of Moslem architecture. The mosque has become a shrine for the Senussi, since his burial there in 1859.

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The Catholic World Includes Odd Corners of the Globe

A DEAD city, in ruins for the past 1,200 years, figured in New York City recently at the consecration ceremonies of a Catholic bishop. The new church official received the title of Auxiliary Bishop of New York and Titular Bishop of Cirene. Greek colonization of North Africa in the 7th century B. C. founded the city of Cirene and Arab invasions destroyed it; the rescued fragments of its ruins in Cirenaica lie in the zone of present Italo-British fighting in eastern Libia (illustration, next page).

"Ghost Towns" Give Titles to Bishoprics in Name Only

The titular sees of the Catholic Church—which are bishops' sees, or seats, in title only—are remnants of formerly strong Catholic territories in half-forgotten corners of the world, which are no longer important enough to justify the residence of a bishop.

Most titular sees are in Asia Minor—Palestine and Syria—or Africa. Unlike residential sees, these bishoprics-in-name-only are assigned to bishops who seldom or never see their sees, but carry on their work at a considerable distance in the districts of other bishops.

Though once predominantly Catholic, many of the titular sees belong now to the Moslem, Buddhist, or other Oriental religions. Certain of the old see cities have disappeared altogether. Others persist in the form of small communities, scarcely known beyond their own neighborhoods. Still others are important only as archeological sites, such as Cirene.

South America Has Highest Proportion of Catholics

Another such is Laodicea in Asia Minor, a titular see of Archbishop Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States. Once a vital trading center, Laodicea is now reduced to crumbling ruins.

All together, there are now between 300 and 400 million Catholics among the world's estimated two or more billion people.

Proportionately, South America has the largest Catholic population of any continent, amounting to more than 90 per cent of the entire number of inhabitants professing any church connection (illustration, cover). In Argentina, both president and vice-president must be Catholic to hold office.

New York and Massachusetts Lead in U. S.

Asia has the least Catholic representation, with less than two per cent of the total population. Africa counts a share of something over two per cent of the total population. Europe, with more than 200 millions professing Catholicism, approaches the 50 per cent mark.

In both Americas there are about 110 million Catholics, of whom the United States accounts for approximately one-fifth. Leading Catholic State in total number of church members is New York, with more than three millions; in proportion to population, however, Massachusetts tops the list. Picturesque members of the nation's Catholic congregations are the converted Indians of the Southwest (illustration, inside cover).

The Philippines have some ten million Catholics; and even little Puerto Rico has around a million and a half.

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commercial champion, aluminum. Magnesium costs 58 per cent more per pound than aluminum, but the lighter weight makes a cubic foot of magnesium actually cost less than the same bulk of its competitor. The newer metal also can serve many of the purposes for which aluminum became popular in industry; it can be hammered, machined, cast, drawn into wire, and extruded into various shapes.

In the shape of light metal parts, magnesium is already in use in typewriters, vacuum-sweepers, motion picture cameras, binoculars, bread-slicers, electric motors, electric fans, sewing machines, lightweight pneumatic tools. Scientists predict greater use of the metal in the manufacture of motor cars, buses, trucks, and trailers, to reduce their weight.

Nowhere is magnesium found as a metal; it occurs only in its several compounds. The sulphate, epsom salts, was discovered in 1695, but the metal itself was not isolated from known compounds until 1808, thus antedating aluminum by about 16 years. Commercial production in the United States began in 1915.

The compounds are used in far greater quantities than the pure metal itself. These are used in making cement and stucco, in plaster board, partition tiles, and insulating materials; in fertilizers; and in large quantities for furnace linings in the metals industries. The most common compound is magnesium carbonate, known as magnesite.

Bulletin No. 3, February 3, 1941.

Photograph by Richard H. Stewart

13 MILES UP, MAGNESIUM REACHED A PEAK ALTITUDE FOR METALS AND MAN

The lightness of the metal made it ideal for the spherical gondola, nine feet in diameter, of the balloon of the National Geographic Society-U. S. Army Air Corps Stratosphere Expedition in 1935. The record altitude recorded was 72,395 feet. Weighing only 638 pounds, the gondola carried a ton of instruments and two men on a flight of 8 hours and 13 minutes. The shell was only three-sixteenths of an inch thick, made of an alloy of more than 95 per cent pure magnesium, 4 per cent aluminum, and a small amount of manganese. Every pound saved in weight enabled the balloon to ascend an additional 15 feet. Taken a short while before the take-off at 7:01 a.m., November 11, the photograph shows the final process of fastening the gondola to ropes straining upward to the already inflated balloon. The top of the gondola was painted white to reflect the sun's direct rays, and the bottom was black to absorb heat rays reflected from the earth, thus equalizing the temperature.

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La Plata River Plays Part in Western Hemisphere Defense

THE agreement reached between Argentina and Uruguay for the defense of the "River Plate zone" has brought into headlines a rare "river"—unusual in that its length exceeds its width by only one-fourth.

In reality, the River Plate—or the Río de la Plata, as it is properly called—is the estuary of the Paraná and the Uruguay Rivers. It is 120 miles wide, and extends in a generally northwest direction inland for only 150 miles.

The spectacular scuttling of the German ship, *Graf Spee*, after a spirited battle has already made the River Plate memorable in the present war.

For four centuries this estuary and its river system have been the main artery of traffic for Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and southern Brazil.

Winds Raise Water Higher Than Tides

The Río de la Plata is a vast indentation in South America's southeast coast, into which a ship could sail without knowing it had left the real ocean, were it not for the mud discoloring the ocean for about 75 miles from the estuary's mouth.

The quantity of mud carried into Río de la Plata by the Paraná affects more than the color. The Paraná brings down so much silt that it is necessary to dredge a channel for ocean steamers to Buenos Aires, Argentina's No. 1 port upstream on the Río de la Plata's southern shore (illustration next page).

This broad expanse of seeming sea is so shallow that the waters of the Paraná and Uruguay Rivers are sufficient in volume to keep the Río de la Plata fresh almost down to Uruguay's port of Montevideo on the north shore.

The mean range of tide in the estuary is about two feet. But this great triangular sheet of water is dominated by the winds which, when blowing strongly upstream and directly into the mouth, may raise the water as much as 12 feet. The maximum recorded rise in its depth is 22 feet.

Parent Rivers Run 3,000 Miles

The banks of the estuary curve inland on both sides at the mouth so that its width of 120 miles is quickly reduced to 50 miles at Montevideo. It then tapers gradually and just below Buenos Aires it is 20 miles wide. At the confluence of the Uruguay and the Paraná it is four miles wide.

The northern, or Uruguayan, shore is comparatively high and rocky, with ranges of hills to the north. The Argentine shore on the south is low.

The Paraná flows into the Plate River through many branches, after a winding course of 2,100 miles that begins in Brazil. For some distance it constitutes the Paraguay-Argentina boundary. Lower portions of the river are navigable.

The Uruguay River, which unites with the Paraná to form the Río de la Plata, also rises in Brazil and, flowing south, separates Brazil and Uruguay from Argentina. It is about 900 miles long and navigable for ships of 12 feet draft to Colón, and of six feet draft to Concordia. Its clear water flows untinged into the River Plate for miles before mingling with the muddy Paraná.

Millenniums ago the Plate River was a vast inland sea, called by geologists the Pampean Sea, and the Río de la Plata was mightier than the Amazon.

Note: Further material about the Río de la Plata appears in "Buenos Aires: Queen of the River of Silver," *National Geographic Magazine*, November, 1939; "The Greatest Voyage in the Annals of the Sea," December, 1932; and "Skypaths Through Latin America," January, 1931.

See also The Society's Map of South America, available at 50c (paper) and 75c (linen).

Bulletin No. 5, February 3, 1941.

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Across the Atlantic, among Europe's predominantly Catholic lands are Italy, Spain, and former Austria, now Germany's "Ostmark." Germany (where the Nazi government has been reported for some time in conflict with the Church) had about 21 million Catholics, before the addition of some six million with the absorption of Austria, and even more when parts of Poland were taken over. Before the partition of Czecho-Slovakia, two-thirds of that small land's population was listed as Catholic.

Some Out-of-the-Way Spots 100 Per Cent Catholic

Other European countries with large Catholic populations include Eire, Portugal, Hungary, France, and Belgium.

Besides covering large segments of the globe, the Catholic world extends into geographic nooks and corners whose names read like those in a gazetteer—from Alaska to Zanzibar.

Some of these regions represent 100 per cent Catholic membership, such as the little Pyrenees republic of Andorra which, according to the Franciscan Almanac, has "Population, 5,231: Catholics, 5,231."

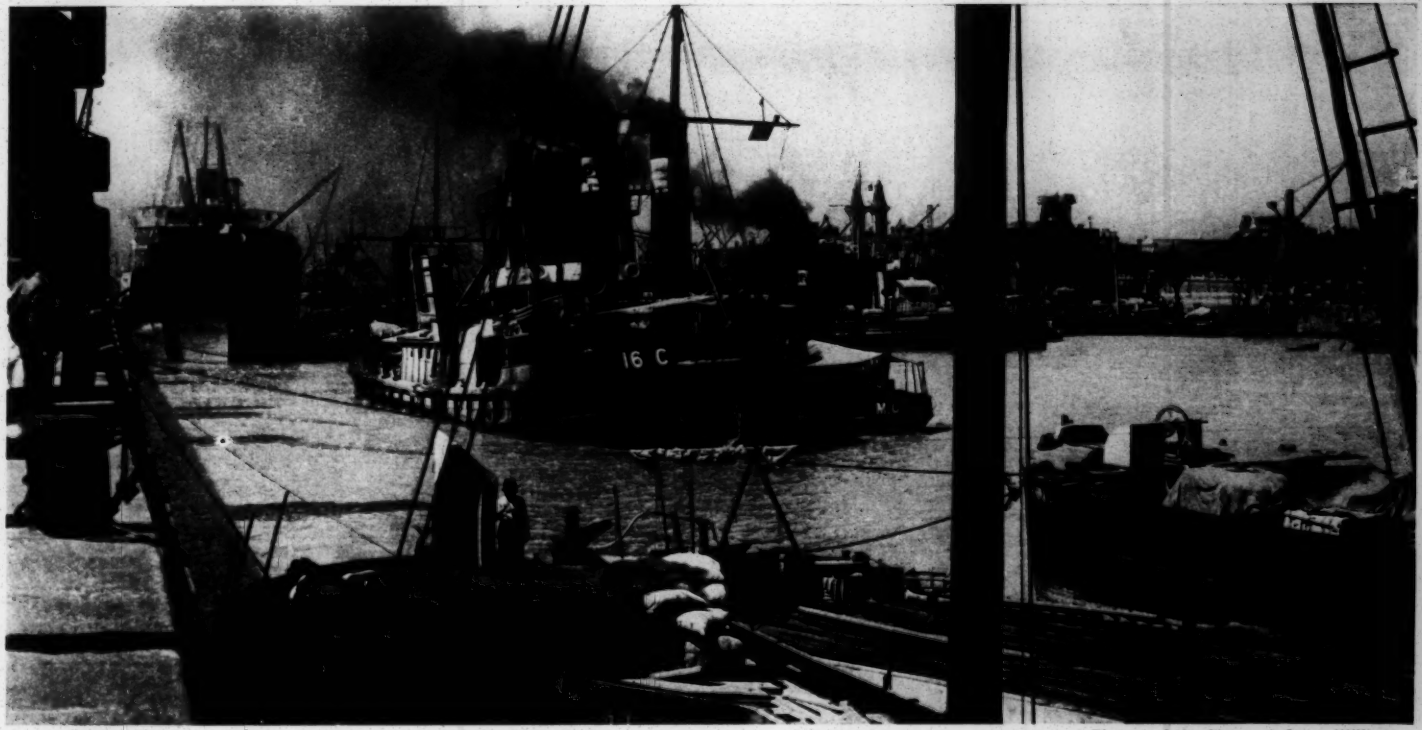
Note: Sites of some of the titular sees of the Catholic Church may be located on The Society's Map of the Bible Lands and Map of the Classical Lands of the Mediterranean, which are available at 50c each (paper) and 75c (linen).

Bulletin No. 4, February 3, 1941.

Photograph by Vittorio Dimani

THE WHOLE STORY OF CIRENE CAN BE PIECED TOGETHER FROM FRAGMENTS OF ITS SCULPTURED BUILDINGS

The North African city of Cirene, a center of learning and international trade in its prime, was an early convert to Christianity and the seat, according to Catholic tradition, of six bishops, including the martyred St. Theodorus. Among its famous natives was the Greek pioneer student of mathematics and astronomy, Eratosthenes, born in 276 B.C., who believed the earth was round and estimated its circumference 1,700 years before Magellan circumnavigated the globe. The Greeks, who founded Cirene in the 7th century B.C., adorned it with statuary and imposing public buildings in keeping with its prosperity. The ancient structures were finally torn down by Arab invaders. The significance of the city in early Christian history is commemorated in the name of the titular see of the new Auxiliary Bishop of New York.



Photograph by Maynard Owen Williams

THE DREDGES KEEP THE "RÍO" IN THE RÍO DE LA PLATA

The Río de la Plata, or "Plate River," is not an ordinary river, but a broad shallow estuary formed by the confluence of the Paraná and the Uruguay Rivers. The vast quantity of silt washed down into the estuary by the muddy Paraná rapidly fills the ship channels and menaces the voluminous shipping pouring into Uruguay's chief port, Montevideo, and Argentina's "river queen," Buenos Aires. These heavy dredges, working constantly to clear away newly formed mud bars, keep channels open so that even transatlantic liners can sail into the estuary and berth at Buenos Aires, at the extensive docks built near the city's business center.